



# Washington State Department of Agriculture News Release

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## **Agriculture offers toll-free number to report poultry health problems**

**OLYMPIA** – The Washington State Department of Agriculture (WSDA) has activated a toll-free number for the public to report diseased or dead domestic poultry, such as chickens, turkeys, domestic ducks and geese, and other farm birds.

The Avian Health Hotline number is 1-800-606-3056.

“This toll-free hotline is a good surveillance tool that will help us collect evidence of a serious bird disease as early as possible,” said Dr. Leonard Eldridge, state veterinarian. “We recognize that bird owners and the general public have serious concerns about bird flu and other animal diseases. Early response is critical to halting the spread of any foreign animal disease. Our goal is to provide a veterinary consultation or initiate a field investigation within 24 hours of an incoming call.”

As part of a national surveillance program, state and federal agencies continue to test domestic and wild birds for avian influenza, including the Asian H5N1 strain of the disease. No case of highly pathogenic avian influenza, which is deadly to birds, has ever been discovered in Washington.

WSDA veterinarians and technicians have found no evidence of bird flu this summer while testing birds at county and regional fairs, swap meets, auctions and game bird farms. Commercial poultry operations conduct their own surveillance and testing as part of their normal biosecurity and disease prevention programs.

If a case of avian flu, Exotic Newcastle disease or other bird disease is discovered through the Avian Health Program’s surveillance efforts, WSDA will activate its response plan in conjunction with the U.S. Department of Agriculture. The agency is prepared to establish isolation and quarantine zones to prevent further spread of any communicable animal disease.

The public should report diseased or dead wild birds, particularly waterfowl or shorebirds to the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife at 1-800-606-8768. The state Department of Health is monitoring the spread of West Nile virus by testing mosquito samples and certain kinds of dead birds; for more information call 1-866-78-VIRUS.

The federal government maintains an information clearinghouse on avian and pandemic flu at [www.pandemicflu.gov](http://www.pandemicflu.gov). The site is managed by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

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